

Amendments to the Claims:

- This listing of the claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of the claims:

Claim 1 (cancelled)

Claim 2 (cancelled)

Claim 3 (cancelled)

Claim 4 (cancelled)

Claim 5 (cancelled)

Claim 6 (cancelled)

Claim 7 (cancelled)

Claim 8 (cancelled)

Claim 9 (cancelled)

Claim 10 (cancelled)

Claim 11 (cancelled)

Claim 12 (New): Method of dewatering sludge, comprising

addition of a basic agent to sludge having a pH equal to or less than 8,

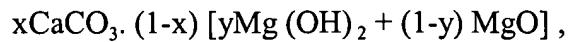
addition to the sludge of at least one flocculating organic component,

by the addition of the above mentioned basic agent, an increase in pH of the sludge to a value less than a pH as from which degradation of the said at least one organic component takes place,

flocculation of the sludge, and

separation of the flocculated sludge between dewatered sludge and a liquid phase,

characterised in that the above mentioned basic agent is a calcaro-magnesian compound complying with the formula



in which

x and y are molar fractions

$0.45 \leq x \geq 0.75$, and

$0 \leq y \leq 1$,

and in that the treated sludge has, until after the said separation, the said value lower than a pH as from which degradation of the said at least one organic component takes place.

Claim 13 (New): Method according to claim 1, characterised in that the calcaro-magnesian compound is a half-burnt dolomite, comprising an MgO component, possibly partially or totally in the form of Mg(OH)₂.

Claim 14 (New): Method according to claim 1, characterised in that it comprises the said increase in pH to a value of no more than 10.

Claim 15 (New): Method according to claim 1, characterised in that the addition of the calcaro-magnesian compound takes place prior to, simultaneously with and/or after the addition of the said at least one flocculating organic compound.

Claim 16 (New): Method according to claim 4, characterised in that the addition of the calcaro-magnesian compound takes place before the above mentioned separation step.

Claim 17 (New): Method according to claim 1, characterised in that it comprises, after the said separation, an incineration of the dewatered sludge.

Claim 18 (New): Method according to claim 1, characterised in that, in the case of acid sludge, it also comprises a prior neutralisation of this acid sludge so that it has a pH of at least 6.

Claim 19 (New): Method according to claim 2, characterised in that it the half-burnt dolomite issues from a burning of double calcium and magnesium carbonate under conditions such that it has a CaO content of less than 5% by weight and an MgCO₃ content of less than 10% by weight.

Claim 20 (New): Use of a calcaro-magnesian compound complying with the formula xCaCO₃. (1-x) [yMg(OH)₂ + (1-y) MgO] , in which x and y are molar fractions, 0.45 ≤ x ≤ 0.75, and 0 ≤ y ≤ 1, for the treatment and dewatering of sludge having a pH equal to or less than 8.

Claim 21 (New): Dewatered sludge, comprising a calcaro-magnesian compound content complying with the formula xCaCO₃. (1-x) [yMg(OH)₂ + (1-y) MgO] , in which x and y are molar fractions, 0.45 ≤ x ≤ 0.75, and 0 ≤ y ≤ 1, and having a pH greater than 8 and equal to or less than 10.

Claim 22 (New): Dewatered sludge according to claim 10, comprising at least 15% by weight of the calcaro-magnesian compound with respect to the dry matter of the sludge before dewatering.